

JUL-14-04 11:13 AM TOWN OF RICHWOOD

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TOWN OF RICHWOOD

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TOWN'S CLERK

Jay Nolas
TOWN'S ATTORNEY

Robert S. Noel, Atty.
TOWN'S MAGISTRATE

Oliver Brown
PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR
BUILDING INSPECTOR

Shirley Henderson
FISCAL OFFICER

Stephanie Miller
ACCOUNTING CLERK
REVENUE AGENT

July 14, 2004

Mr. Michael K. Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, South West
Washington, DC 20554

Re: M.B. Docket No. 04-207

Dear Chairman Powell:

As mayor of the Town of Richwood, Louisiana, I am concerned with the "a la carte" cable proposal currently under debate in Congress. I believe its implementation will result in higher prices and ultimately, the demise of ethnic, foreign language and specialty channels that are so vital to our cable system and to the American public.

Many cable networks rely on advertising for a significant portion of their revenue. Without it, they must rely on licensing agreements as their base for profit. The costs of licensing agreements are generally passed onto customers.

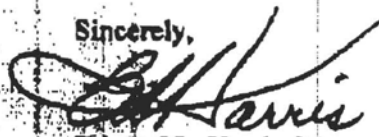
Under the "a la carte system," consumers would be able to choose and pay for only the channels they watch. This idea initially sounds good. However, channels that have more specialized audiences will experience a decline in viewers. A decline in viewers means less money from advertising, decreased diversity and quality of programming and higher costs passed onto consumers.

For too long, African-Americans, Hispanics and other minorities did not have programming that reflected their cultures and life experiences available. The explosion of cable programming over the past 20 years has provided numerous channels that reflect the diversity of all Americans. The "a la carte" system would destroy all progress we have made in cable programming to date.

Further, these groups will be further marginalized due to the inevitable increase in overall system costs, which would require all consumers to have addressable converters to access "a la carte" programming. Fewer than half of U.S. cable households today subscribe to services requiring such converters. Thus, for tens of millions of customers, who rely on "cable-ready" television sets, there could potentially be a 30% increase in the cost of the equipment alone in addition to the added costs from channels fees.

Your cooperation in the aforementioned is appreciated.

Sincerely,


Edward L. Harris, Mayor

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TO
THE DAWN OF A STRONGER TOMORROW